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Department of State

INFO:

Ambassy BOEN, Ambassy LIMA, Ambassy MEXICO CITY,
Ambassy SANTIAGO, USIA/IAL, Ambassy ROME

Ambassy RIO DE JANEIRO

August 25, 1970

Photographs Published on Brazilian Tortures

The Jornal do Brasil of August 23 reports that various photographs used by foreign magazines to illustrate stories on torture of political prisoners in Brazil actually showed Brazilian soldiers undergoing commando training. The photographs reportedly were taken by a Jornal do Brasil photographer and first appeared in that paper on August 6, 7, and 8 of 1969 to illustrate a series on Brazil's paratroop commando training exercises. Jornal do Brasil says this is the same type of training used by the U. S. in the Panama Canal Zone, and its purpose is to give Brazil's elite troops a high degree of resistance against brainwashing and other forms of mistreatment to which prisoners have been subjected in Korea and Vietnam.

Stories about torture in Brazil which used the pictures appeared in Vision of Chile and Mexico (January 18, 1970); Stern of West Germany (January 18, 1970); Domenica del Corriere of Italy (February 24, 1970); and Oiga of Peru (June 5, 1970). Of two photographs which were most widely used with misleading captions, one showed a "prisoner" tied to a wooden cross with a uniformed soldier standing near looking on, and the other a "prisoner" confined in a suspended cage. Jornal do Brasil published the August 23 expose on the misuse of its photographs at the request of the First Army press officer, who had received a copy of the Stern article from Brazil's military attaché in Bonn.

Comment: Blatant misrepresentation of photographs such as these by foreign sensationalist journals, while serving to stir up passions abroad against the GCB, no doubt damage the efforts of any serious campaign against torture. Such misrepresentations

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POL:DP/matthews:mb

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POL:REJohnson

USIS:JMcKinzel (draft)

DAO:W.J. Diani (draft)

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provide a convenient means for GCB organs to discredit any and all allegations of torture by holding up the photographs which foreign publications have used to document such charges and proving that they are fakes. The wide publication of the photos also helps the GCB to convince itself that it is the victim of a deliberate international defamation campaign.

 BOCHITA

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